Section (b) - Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended) A method for establishing and ~~initiating~~ brokering a transaction between purchasers and vendors over a wide area computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a vendor database, said database comprising vendor information on a plurality of vendors, said vendor information comprising a description of the goods and services offered by said vendors;

providing a request for proposal (RFP) template to at least one potential purchaser over said wide area computer network;

receiving RFP information from said at least one potential purchaser into said RFP template, over said wide area computer network, said RFP information comprising a description of the goods and services required by said at least one potential purchaser;

comparing said RFP information with said vendor information in said vendor database;

identifying vendors in said vendor database offering goods and services similar to said goods and services required by said at least one potential purchaser;

communicating said RFP information to said identified vendors; and

communicating a response from at least one of said identified vendors to said at least one potential purchaser, said response comprising a proposal to provide goods and services to said at least one potential purchaser at a specified price and according to specified terms.

Claim 2 (currently amended). The method of Claim 1 wherein said comparing step ~~is~~ and said identifying step are carried out automatically by a centralized data processing system linked to said wide area computer network and to said vendor database.

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Claim 3 (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein said comparing step comprises:

displaying a vendor selection list to said at least one potential purchaser over said wide area computer network, said list comprising at least one of said plurality of vendors and said <u>vendor</u> information in said vendor database associated with said at least one of said plurality of vendors; and said identifying step comprises receiving <u>selection information comprising a</u> ~~selection~~ <u>list</u> of vendors from said at least one potential purchaser over said wide area computer network.